



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

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Fiscal Responsibility – Since When?

**Why Do Democrats Oppose the
President's Missile Defense Funding Request?
It's Not the Cost**

Democrats continue to oppose efforts to improve our national defense, arguing that certain programs are too expensive and do not represent responsible government spending. Yet their opposition based on a program's price tag evaporates when voting on non-defense issues.

For example, Senate Democrats deliberately undermined the President's missile defense program – seeking to cut its funding by more than \$800 million and restricting its administration – while arguing that the program as a whole is simply unaffordable. Meanwhile, these same Democrats have supported numerous bills that will cost taxpayers far more than a missile defense program – increasing the deficit and (by their own definition) raiding Social Security and Medicare.

A pattern is clear: Fiscal responsibility and preserving Social Security and Medicare are unimportant when Democrat spending priorities are considered, but when it comes to protecting American families from a nuclear missile attack, they suddenly take precedence.

Democrats Clamor About Missile Defense Costs

On the one hand, Senate Democrats repeatedly criticize the President's missile defense program for its price tag and effect on the budget:

- ▶ “The President believes . . . that we need to commit about \$8 billion, \$8.5 billion, in '03 and assuming increasing amounts thereafter to build a national missile defense system. . . . First of all, I don't know that that's even appropriate. And secondly, I know that it's not affordable.”
– Senator Dayton, Armed Services Committee Hearing, February 12, 2002
- ▶ “The President wants an additional \$39 billion for defense . . . including more than \$8 billion to research and test his missile defense plan. . . . I do not wish for the United States to be left undefended . . . but neither do I wish for the military to be left, in the face of public silence, to

make decisions that spend our treasure and which may create new problems for us in arenas yet unconsidered. . . . President Bush proposes to invest many billions of dollars to achieve military superiority in a new realm, where there currently is no threat, jeopardizing the economic health of the nation. . . . The threat does not justify the pace. Our budget projections cannot support the pace.”

– Senator Byrd, *Congressional Record*, S9827-9828, September 26, 2001

- ▶ “We seem to be moving in the direction . . . where the answer to the emerging threat is another incredibly cumbersome and expensive and highly technical [missile defense] system that has incredible limitations once you get beyond ballistic missiles.”
– Senator Biden, Foreign Relations Committee Hearing, May 16, 2002

Democrat Spending Spree

On the other hand, Democrats support numerous programs – some partisan, some not – whose costs, and impact on the deficit, dwarf the potential costs of protecting American families from a nuclear missile:

- ▶ **Democrat Budget Resolution Raids Social Security:** Senator Conrad’s budget, approved in committee along party lines, cut \$245 billion from the President’s defense funding request while increasing non-defense funding by \$600 billion over the baseline. (Source: Summary of Chairman’s Mark – FY 2002 Prepared by the SBC-GOP Staff)
- ▶ **Farm bill:** The Majority Leader and the Chairman of the Budget Committee both supported this bill without addressing its obvious impact on deficits. Over the next 10 years this bill will spend \$491.2 billion, a \$82.3 billion increase over the March 2002 baseline. (Source CBO)
- ▶ **Non-Defense Funding in the Emergency Supplemental:** In spite of a veto threat from the White House, Senator Byrd and the rest of the Democrat leadership insisted on adding \$4.3 billion in non-emergency, non-defense funding to the President’s supplemental request.
- ▶ **Energy bill:** This bill, written by Majority Leader Daschle, contains energy tax incentives that will increase the deficit by \$14 billion over the next 10 years. (Source: Energy Committee Press Release, April 26, 2002)
- ▶ **Trade Adjustment Assistance:** The Majority Leader insisted that the Trade Promotion Authority bill be linked to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) “enhancements.” This TAA provision will have a net effect on the deficit of \$5.3 billion over the next decade. (Source: preliminary CBO estimate of H.R. 3009, as passed by the Senate)

- ▶ **Patients' Bill of Rights**: Senators Kennedy and Edwards' bill would increase the price of employer-provided health benefits, forcing employers to shift workers' compensation from taxable wages to untaxed health benefits. Cost to the deficit and Social Security over 10 years? \$7 billion. (Source: CBO)

Democrats' True Priorities

Democrats' mantra of "responsible spending and doing what is affordable" continues to serve as their rationale for fighting improvements to our national defense. They assert that priorities like missile defense are just too expensive while ignoring the costs of their own agenda.

Senator Reed (D-RI), chairman of the SASC's Strategic Subcommittee, recently observed, "It's one of these things that in any kind of budget, where you're going to have to make some tough choices about what you can afford today. . ." (press conference, June 19, 2002).

Republicans believe we cannot afford to ignore the threat of a future missile attack. We believe the Senate should live up to its obligations under the 1999 National Missile Defense Act – supported by 93 percent of the Democrat conference – which called for the deployment of missile defenses as soon as technologically possible.

It appears Democrats want to have it not just both ways, but all ways. They vote to support missile defense in theory, but oppose it in practice. They argue for fiscal responsibility when national defense is concerned, but repeatedly raid the budget and the trust funds for other domestic programs.

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